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Jan 29, 1994

Notes on Eric Markusen: Genocidal Dimensions of the Atomic Bombs

--ask EM: How come he was the one listener who has heard me on the relationship of strategic bombing, nuclear planning and genocide, who picked up on it, became comparably obsessed?

What in his background is like mine? And Susan Griffin's?

--Controversy over use of word "genocide": a) It is uncontroversial to define the "Holocaust" as genocide;

b) The Holocaust is conventionally regarded--partly as a result of a determined and continuous effort by Zionists--as "the worst thing ever done."

c) Therefore, there is an incentive and tendency for someone trying to draw attention to a particular massacre and/or to its extreme (under-recognized) badness, to call it "genocide": to associate it with--as comparable to (even if not to equate it with) this "worst thing ever done."

d) Zionists and Jews resist this, as diminishing the uniqueness and unique badness of the Holocaust (which they don't like to regard as "comparable" to anything, except for being "incomparably worse"). I.e., there is an organized bias against calling anything else genocide. (One of the best candidates for the term is the Turkish massacre of the Armenians--an actual precedent for the Holocaust: See Hitler comments. The Turks particularly resist the term genocide, and they have effectively inhibited international and institutional recognition of this past crime.

--What is the supposed, alleged, point of emphasizing and insisting dogmatically on the "uniqueness, exceptionality, incomparability" of the Holocaust/

What are the benefits--and to whom--of this position? What are the costs? In general, the consequences?

What is the merit of insisting, in effect, that it can neither be "understood," nor serve as basis for improving our understanding of other and future events, as basis for learning? (friedlander, "the apparent historical exceptionality" of the Holocaust, "could well" make it "inaccessible to all attempts at a significant representation and interpretation." "Apparently, it does not help us to understand the present-day world or the future of the human condition." EM, p. 4. This is not only obviously disadvantageous but quite counter-intuitive. Again, what is the point, the justification for such an insistence or conclusion?



BACKGROUND OF DR. DANIEL ELLSBERG

Education

- Harvard College, 1948-52 (B.A., Economics; summa cum laude; Phi Beta Kappa).
- Woodrow Wilson Fellow, King's College, Cambridge University, 1952-53.
- Society of Fellows, Harvard, 1957-59.
- Ph.D. in Economics, Harvard, 1962 (undergraduate and Ph.D. theses on decision-making under uncertainty).

Military Service

Officer, U.S. Marine Corps, 1954-57: rifle platoon leader, rifle company commander, operations officer. (Voluntarily extended enlistment for 8 months, 1956-57, to serve in Mediterranean during Suez crisis.)

Major Employment

- RAND Corporation, Santa Monica: strategic analyst, Economics Department, 1958-64, 1967-70.
- Consultant to the Defense Department, State Department and White House (see list below) on command and control of nuclear weapons and on strategic nuclear war plans, 1961-64; on Vietnam options and lessons, 1967-69.
- Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs John T. McNaughton, 1964-65 (GS-18: highest Civil Service "super-grade," civilian equivalent of Lt. General).
- Senior Liaison Officer under Edward Lansdale, State Department (FSR-1, State Department equivalent of GS-18), U.S. Embassy, Saigon, South Vietnam, 1965-66. Member of Roles and Missions Study for Mission Council, 1966.
- Special Assistant to Deputy Ambassador William Porter, U.S. Embassy, South Vietnam, 1967, evaluating pacification (involving considerable field observation of combat operations with ARVN and U.S. units).
- Senior Research Associate, Center for International

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Sept. 13, 1994
Daniel Ellsberg

Comments on Robert S. McNamara talk to ECAAR Forum, for War and Peace:

For the last quarter of a century, Robert McNamara has been telling the truth about nuclear weapons, with candor and with great authority. President Clinton could not do better than to seek his counsel and learn from him on nuclear policy and disarmament, starting with the substance of this article.

From his own experience in the Cuban Missile Crisis, illuminated by recent startling revelations by Russian officers, McNamara draws just the right lesson, harsh on the participants including himself but of crucial importance. It is not only the spread of nuclear weapons to madmen like Idi Amin or to Hitler-like types like Saddam Hussein that is to be feared, as popular imagination supposes. That underestimates gravely the danger of continued proliferation, or the prolonged existence even of present arsenals.

What the former Secretary of Defense is acknowledging, admirably, is that even officials as deliberative and cautious as himself and John F. Kennedy--and for that matter, Khrushchev, for all his bluster--came frighteningly close to triggering a cataclysm. The practical moral is clear. This is not a species to be trusted with nuclear weapons. There are no governments in whose hands the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons is safe, for themselves, their adversaries or the world.

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Corrections and Comments on Herken, Counsels of War
June 11, 1986

p. 218: "Friends said they had begun to notice an apparent change of heart concerning the war on Ellsberg's part shortly after his return from a 1967 tour of Vietnam for the Pentagon and Rand.¹ Engaged in a study of Vietcong motivation for Rand, Ellsberg had been particularly impressed with the evidence of the enemy's dedication and morale.² A marine reservist,³ Ellsberg had come back from the front with both his optimism about the war and his health undermined. "They don't c

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October 25, 1991

--Bush and Nobel Prize

If one believes that the Nobel Prize should be given only on the basis of standards that Martin Luther King would meet--character, philosophy, lifetime commitment, approach--then Bush would obviously not qualify, but then, neither would a number of past recipients.

By the criteria that have applied in granting the "really existing Nobel Peace Prize" Bush has earned the award a

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